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18 February 2015

Dear Paul and Tim

### **WESSEX ROUTE STUDY DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

Thank you for consulting Guildford Borough Council on the Wessex Route Study Draft for Consultation. Guildford Borough Council supports the preparation of this draft Route Study by Network Rail and the Wessex Alliance as part of the Long Term Planning Process.

Rail services are a key part of the transport network serving Guildford borough. There are twelve rail stations in the borough at which there were over 10.89 million estimated entries and exits in 2013/14, including 7.96 million at Guildford rail station which is recognised in the Study Draft as one of the important regional centres served by the Wessex Route operations. Of residents in the borough who travel to their place of work, 12.6 per cent travelled by train in 2011 (2011 Census), compared to 9.5 per cent in 2001. This represents an absolute increase of over 1,900 people per day using the train to get to work across the decade.

The Council broadly supports the options for investment included in the Study Draft and offers the following responses to specific options.

#### **Main Line peak capacity – The Council Option B Crossrail 2**



***The Council supports Option B – the Crossrail 2 option***

The Council supports Option B – the Crossrail 2 option – which, as the Study Draft states, is the only option which has the potential to get close to the long term target train numbers to cope with growth.

The supplementary option which combines Option B and Option C interventions, the latter involving European Train Control Systems (ETCS)/Automatic Train Operation deployment on the main lines, is also supported by the Council.



***The Council supports the Guildford Station Capacity scheme with the 'Heavy' option for passenger access and interchange***

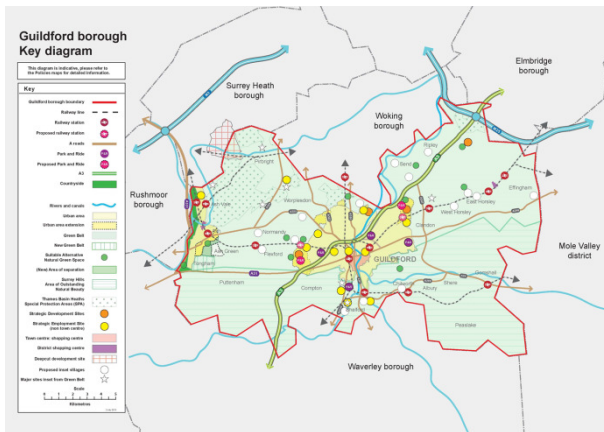
We note that all three options (A, B and C), plus the supplementary options, require Working Grade Separation and Working Platform Capacity and Guildford Station Capacity increases, the latter involving works to provide two new platforms and new tracks, enhancing the station's capacity. The Council supports this work.

The Council also supports the 'Heavy' option for passenger access and interchange

involving a complete refurbishment of the footbridge and canopies with a new larger structure containing lifts to all platforms that would resolve current vertical circulation issues for passengers.

The Council also supports the introduction of direct services between Guildford and Farnham (Conditional output reference CO46), which we understand is facilitated by the works described above.

### **New Stations at Merrow and Park Barn**



The provision of new rail stations at Merrow on the New Guildford Line and at Park Barn on the North Downs Line in Guildford has been recommended in both the Surrey Rail Strategy and the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study.

Accordingly, the Draft Guildford Borough Local Plan (July 2014) included new rail stations in both locations.

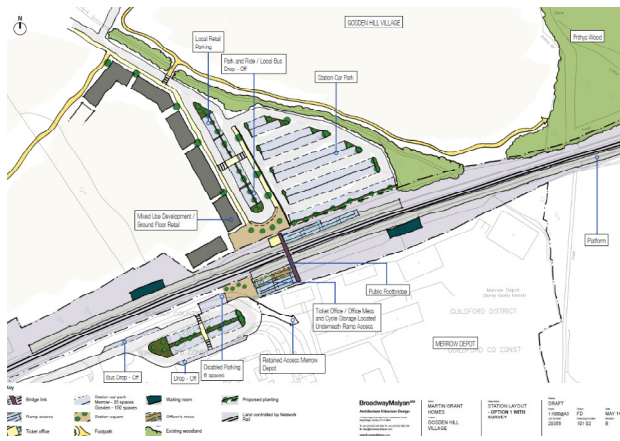
***New railway stations at Merrow and Park Barn are key elements of the Council's thinking in its emerging Local Plan***

A new rail station at Park Barn on the western edge of Guildford would serve:

- Surrey Research Park
- Royal Surrey County Hospital, the largest employer in Guildford with 3,500 staff
- University of Surrey's Manor Park campus including the Surrey Sports Park
- Park Barn residential area
- A potential future urban extension to Guildford at Blackwell Farm, which the Draft Local Plan (July 2014) identified as accommodating 2,250 homes.

The Royal Surrey County Hospital and the University of Surrey both have growth aspirations for their sites.

A new rail station would relieve traffic congestion and parking issues, particularly in the context of the growth aspirations of the University, Hospital and Research Park.



A new station at Merrow on the eastern edge of Guildford would serve the existing residential areas of Merrow and Burpham and a potential urban extension to Guildford at Gosden Hill Farm, which the Draft Local Plan (July 2014) identified as accommodating 2,000 homes.

Network Rail’s letter to Martin Grant Homes of 16 September 2014 (from Sam McCarthy, Alliance Commercial Director) provides comfort that, subject to further assessment and securing approval from the DfT, ‘South West Trains and Network Rail consider the deliver of a new station at Merrow to be feasible and viable’.

## North Downs Line



The Council supports proposed improvements to the North Downs Line from Gatwick Airport to Reading, with the potential electrification of the line. Our support for this is conditional upon the proviso that the service frequency to stations along the line at Gomshall, Chilworth, Shalford, Guildford, Wanborough, Ash and North Camp stations in Guildford borough should not be reduced.

As stated above, the Council supports the provision of a new rail station at Park Barn on the North Downs Line.

***The Council supports proposed improvements to the North Downs Line... but service frequency to stations in the borough should not be reduced***

## Working together

Guildford Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will continue to work with Network Rail, South West Trains, First Great Western, Surrey County Council, and the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, to progress the development and delivery of improvements to the rail network in Guildford borough.

The emerging Guildford Borough Local Plan, encouraged by the Department for Transport and other partners, will promote a package of sustainable transport interventions to reinforce current public transport services and infrastructure and to enable a modest modal shift away from usage of the car over the plan period. A key to this is an enhancement of the rail network.

Current and forthcoming projects in this vein include the following.

- The development of the **Sustainable Movement Corridor** concept, as first identified in the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study. The proposed Sustainable Movement Corridor would offer a priority pathway for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, largely along existing roads in the town, allowing fast and direct connections between Guildford railway station and key locations such as the Surrey Research Park, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Onslow Park and Ride, University of Surrey, Guildford town centre, Spectrum Leisure Complex and Slyfield Area Regeneration Project.
- Feasibility work to consider the provision of **new railway stations at Park Barn and at Merrow**.
- Investigating options for the **closure or improvement of the level crossings** in the borough.

Thank you once again for providing this opportunity to input to the preparation of the Route Study.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Matt Furniss**  
**Lead Councillor for Transport Infrastructure and Environment**

cc:

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Cllr Mike Goodman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, Surrey County Council  
Cllr John Furey, Cabinet Member, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Flooding, Surrey County Council  
Cllr Mark Brett-Warburton, Chairman – Guildford Local Committee, Surrey County Council  
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